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Abstract

Migratien patterns, health standards, living cenditicns, and educational cppcrtunities are the highlights cf this repcrt cf migrant farm workers in Utah. A review cf the migratcry wcrker streams in the United States reveals that most migratory workers in Utah come frcm the Ric Grande valley area of southwest United States. Because most are Mexican Americans, cultural and language conflicts create prcblems. Health conditions and prcblems are reviewed and a specific case is presented fcr illustratien. A brief sectien cf the report ccvers problems of adequate living conditions. Considerable attentien is fccused cn the educatien cf the children cf the migrant workers. This aspect is viewed from many angles and the effects of recent Federal legislatien are evaluated. (DB)

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MIGRANTS IN UTAH

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MIGRANTS IN UTAH

The agriculture migrant worker plays an important role in the economy of the state of Utah. Without their services it would be impossible to produce the crops that add millions of dollars annually to gross product of the state. Being such a vital part of the economic structure does not seem to carry much influence in the way they are treated in Utah and other states where they live and work.

From May until November, migrant workers spend their time planting, cultivating and harvesting crops in Utah. In 1965 there were 4,432 migrant people in the state, 3,665 of whom were classified as workers.

To understand migrant problems in Utah it is important to look at the total picture of the migrant in the United States. The 1968 Report of Migratory Farm Labor Problems in the U.S. identifies the migratory stream:

> The bulk of the domestic migratory workers travel in three major routes northward from states along the southern border of the country. [redacted]. The main stream flows north and west from Texas, beginning in the spring and covering most of the North Central, Mountain and Pacific Coast states before the season ends around December. The crops involved are fruits and vegetables, sugar beets, and cotton. Many of the workers in this migratory stream are Americans of Mexican descent traveling with their families.
>
> A smaller stream draws workers from Florida and other Southeastern states for the Florida citrus and winter vegetable harvest. The migrants then work northward during the spring

> and summer through the Atlantic Coast states, sometimes as far north as New England. Negroes constitute a large proportion of the East Coast stream.
>
> Workers following a third major migratory route start in southern California and work northward through the Pacific Coast states. A large number of Spanish Americans work along this route.

The migrant stream that extends through Utah consists of Mexican-Americans, Indians and some white people. The majority are Mexican-Americans from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Most of the Mexican-Americans are on the move for at least six months of the year, with their winter homes in Texas. There are a few Braceros that manage to get into the U.S. and follow the migrant stream. Several were recently sent back to Old Mexico, from Ogden, where they had lived before being discovered.

Another large segment of the migrant population is the Indian. There are several tribes represented including Navajo, Chivwits, and Kickapoo. Of the Indians, 70 percent are Navajo from Utah and Arizona. There are Chivwits from Washington County, Utah and some Kickapoo Indians from Mexico. As a result of a treaty with Mexico, the Kickapoo are allowed to work in the United States.

There are small numbers of Indians from Nevada, Idaho and California who come to northern Utah each year for certain crops. The number has grown gradually until this year there are approximately forty from Nevada alone who are working in Box Elder County.

There are some white people in the migrant stream, but many of them do not migrate from one state to another. They live in the state but migrate to the areas of employment. There are, however, some white migrants who live in the same camps with Mexican-Americans and who follow the migrant stream.

Of the many facets of migrant problems, education, living conditions and health loom large as factors that need attention.

HEALTH

The child of the average migrant worker thinks he is the most vaccinated and inoculated child in the United States. As he arrives in an area he is immediately contacted by a health nurse for "shots." Many of the migrants do not carry records, consequently the child is immunized each time he moves. The "shot" situation is one of recent origin and is only an irritation.

The case of seven year old Blanca Gutierrez can be cited to illustrate a more serious problem. Mr. Ralph Jaramillo, a Mexican-American, disabled veteran of the Korean War serves as recruiter and family contact man for the Davis County School District in the school for children of migrant workers. Mr. Jaramillo noticed the brace Blanca wore around her neck and down to her waist was causing sores where the brace came in contact with her skin. Through the cooperation of the principal of the summer school, a teacher, and others, Blanca was visited by Dr. Beverly Kern and admitted to the

Primary Childrens' Hospital for treatment. It was discovered that Blanca would have died within a year if she had continued wearing the brace which was too small and ill-fitting. She had to have immediate corrective therapy to save her life.

Another aspect of this case summarizes the problems of health for the migrant worker. The family was to move to Wyoming the day Blanca was admitted to the hospital and were going to take her with them even though she needed attention. It was only through the efforts of an Episcopal Father, a Catholic Priest, and a Mormon Stake President that they were persuaded to stay and keep Blanca in the hospital. These same people helped make arrangements for the family to stay near Blanca. She will be in the hospital for a year and will have to have extensive treatment to correct the curvature in her spine. It was very fortunate that Mr. Jaramillo had the background as a medic in the service to notice her condition.

Many children are suffering from ailments and conditions that are not corrected as a result of not being in one place long enough to have proper care. The Migrant Health Act of 1962 provides for improvement of health conditions for migrants. (1:2)

> The total migrant population has been estimated at well <u>over 1 million</u> including workers and their families. The migrant family carries his health problems into <u>46 of the 50 states</u>, or into well over 700 of the nearly 3,000 counties in the United States. The health and available health care of these citizens is far below the national norm.

> Traditionally rejected by the same communities which demand their services, migrants are further handicapped by financial impoverishment which makes them unable to pay for necessary medical attention. Restrictive state and local laws and practices frequently bar health and welfare services to needy nonresidents, including the migrant and his dependents.

As a result of the Act of 1962 many of the health problems have been improved, however, there are still many people who suffer because they are on the move constantly. In many cases, they are not not aware of services that are available.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Conferences with State Health Department officials in charge of migrant labor and extensive on-site visits, clearly indicate that living conditions for the migrant worker in Utah are below an acceptable standard in terms of health and humane considerations.

Of the four main camps in Weber County one is in excellent condition and three are above the average for Utah. Box Elder County has 200 living units in 68 camps. Of those visited, only a few were considered adequate. Most of the units were dilapidated, filthy, old homes that were not suitable for human occuaption.

Cache, Utah and Davis Counties have made some progress in improving living conditions for the migrant worker but have much to do before they have satisfactory facilities. The State Department of Health is working with county commissions throughout the state in an improvement program that will help solve the problem.

The counties in the southern part of the state have very poor accomodations for migrant workers. Carbon, Sevier, Sanpete, Iron and Washington are examples. The majority of migrants in these counties are Indians from Utah and surrounding states. As is the case with most migrants, housing consists of old railroad cars, automobiles, buses, abandoned houses, chicken-coops and old army barracks.

The problem seems to be one of attitude rather than economics. Some of the farmers look at migrant workers as though they were sub-human. In fact they construct expensive buildings to protect their equipment, but show very little concern for the dwelling in which the migrant worker lives. In the case of the Box Elder camps, it is evident that much could be done at very little cost to clean up and fix up the camps if the farmers would look at migrant workers as human beings rather than something to plant, cultivate and harvest crops. It should be made clear that there are some very good living units in Box Elder County--the problem is that there are just not enough to take care of the number of people needed at peak employment periods.

Education for the migrant child has traditionally been limited to short periods of school in several different locations or no formal education of any kind. As a result, the migrant child is usually at least two grades behind the norm for his age, has a difficult time in school because of his language, and usually drops out of school at an early age.

Most parents of migrant children see a need for education and hope their children will somehow be able to graduate from high school. They want to see their children do something other than follow the crops, but cannot see how it is possible.

In 1964 Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act which started the education program that has now grown to five school districts in Utah In the summer of 1968 there are 291 students enrolled in five schools. Many of the students stay in the area for the full summer school program. (8-10 weeks). Others come to school in Utah for a few weeks and move on to other states in the migrant stream. The schools in Utah and the enrollment data are listed below:

1968 Summer Enrollment

	Low	Peak	Average	Accumulated	Full Time
Box Elder	25	67	38	72	22
Cache	21	50	26	36	23
Davis	22	43	32	66	9
Nebo	21	43	37	51	23
Weber	39	65	61	66	38
				291	115

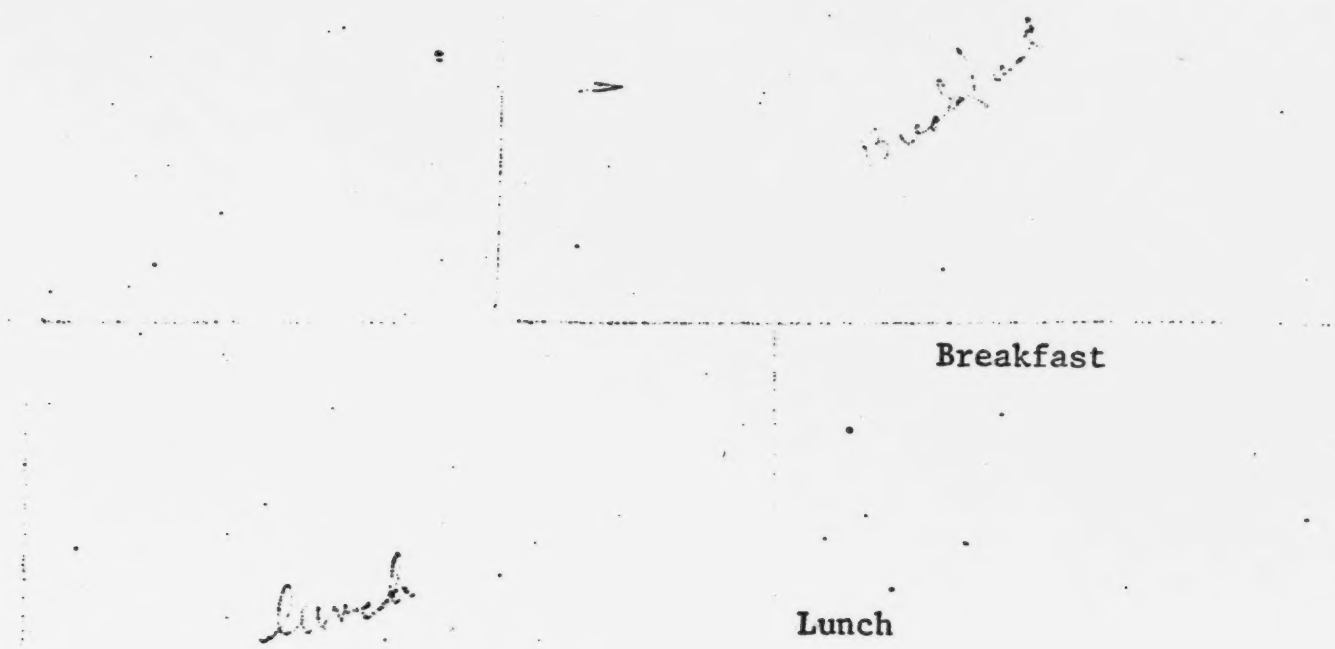
The Utah schools for migrant children are commited to the thesis that each child should be treated as an individual and that his needs must be assessed before they can be met. The schools try to start the child where he is on the educational ladder and then help him climb as far and as fast as he can in the short time he is in the school.

The migrant child has some characteristics that must be recognized in evaluating his needs. Some of the significant factors that influence the child are:

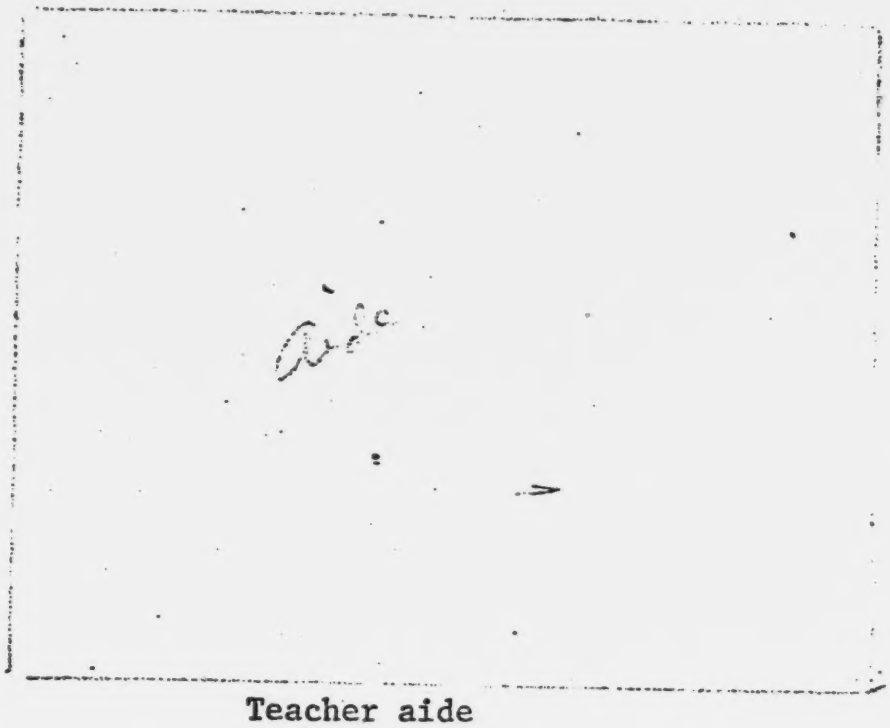
1. Constantly changing environment.
2. Living conditions that are seldom conducive to learning.
   a. Overcrowded
   b. Lack of study area
   c. Difficult to keep clean
   d. Ventilation
   e. Noisy
   f. Confusing
3. Improper diet.
4. Poor health.
5. Different goals than those in community.
6. Immediate reward oriented--many lack long term goals.
7. Lack of communicative skills. Many do not speak English.

As a result of the different conditions that effect the migrant child, there is a demand for special help in meeting needs of the individual child.

A first step in teaching children is to make sure their basic needs are taken care of. It has been strongly suggested that very little learning takes place if the learner is hungry, therefore, all schools have served breakfast and lunch to the children. There is a concensus of opinion of all educators that after they are full, they want to learn. It was learned that some students were not attending school due to a lack of proper clothing. A drive was conducted in one district and clothes were obtained, consequently increasing enrollment.



In an effort to individualize instruction, the use of teacher aides has been adopted in most schools. An an example, Weber County uses two Mexican-American housewives from the community to work as aides. These women work with the teacher in reading and other subject matter as well as doing some of the "busy work" tasks that teachers normally have to do. The aides also act as interpretors when needed.



Teacher aide

The schools are trying to preserve the culture of the migrant by singing some songs in Spanish, making pinatas and trying to give the students a feeling that Spanish is a beautiful and useful language.

EVALUATION

Visitations to all schools and some camps indicate an overwhelming acceptance of the programs of education. One example of the kind of enthusiasm about the schools is illustrated by the results of a survey made in Weber District. A questionnaire

(written in Spanish) was sent to parents of students enrolled in summer school. All of the returns were in the affirmative and left no doubt that parents wanted the schools again next year. Another example was the fact that some migrants in Cache County preferred to drive from Cache to Box Elder to work for a few weeks in between crops in Cache. They felt they should not move the children while they were in school, consequently they commuted rather than move the children FOR even ~~for~~ a few weeks.

At first it was a surprise to find that parents wanted basics taught in school. It had been assumed that school should be more relaxed and not so concentrated on the basic skills, however, it was soon evident that parents wanted their children to learn as fast as they could with very little play. This is another clear indication that parents attitudes are changing.

SUMMARY

The migrant worker in Utah plays an important role in the state's economy. Health, living conditions, and education are important problems that need increased effort. There is an attitude among some farmers that the migrant worker is a sub-human and does not need human consideration. Living conditions are sub-standard in most of the counties in Utah. There are, however, many adequate housing units.

The majority of migrants in Utah are Mexican-American. (APPROXIMATELY 4000) There are also approximately 1,000 Indian migrants.

Health care is difficult because they are constantly on the move.

The State Health Department is working with county commissioners to improve health conditions.

Migrant education is improving both in quality of education and in numbers of children.

Parents are happy with the migrant school program and want it continued.

There are over 1 million migrant workers in the United States.

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